347.4
Hemerocampa pseudotsugata
Lymantriidae
LGL-3-9
1530

WASHINGTON
OREGON

Forest Service News

Pacific Northwest Region

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tree Moth Invades Northeast Oregon Area

An insect invasion of more than 10,000 acres of forest land north of La Grande, Oregon, is turning fir trees reddish-brown.

Many of the trees attacked by the Douglas-fir tussock moth will die after being defoliated.

The outbreak involves private lands and some Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla National Forest lands near La Grande and extending north to the Wenaha River.

The tussock moth outbreak is being evaluated by entomologists from the Oregon Department of Forestry and the U.S. Forest Service to determine whether an aerial spray project would be practical. The project would be designed to field test an experimental insecticide, Zectran, that may replace DDT. DDT, recently banned, was last used by the Forest Service in Oregon in 1965 when a tussock moth outbreak near Burns was controlled without apparent adverse effect on the environment. Zectran is a short-lived, non-persistent insecticide that is safe to plants and animals.

Before deciding to begin a spray project, tussock moth caterpillars are being collected and sent to the Forestry Sciences Laboratory at Corvallis for virus analysis. If the level of the naturally occurring virus is high enough to control the outbreak, no spraying will be done.

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